



**DENTIST  
&  
DENTAL  
AUXILIARY**

**RECOVERY PROGRAM**

For information or assistance, call any time: **1.800.522.9198**

# Mission Statement

The Dentist Recovery Program exists to support the rehabilitation and safe reintegration of California's licensed dentists whose wellness and ability to practice safely have been impacted by substance abuse.

## Do I Need Help?

If you're questioning whether you need help for substance abuse, there's a good chance you would benefit from support. These challenges tend to grow over time, becoming more serious and difficult to address when not recognized early. Delayed or misdirected efforts can increase stress and frustration, making the situation feel overwhelming. For dentists and dental auxiliaries, unaddressed substance abuse can impair one's professional judgment and put at risk one's career, and, even worse, one's life.

## You're Not Alone...

Substance use-related challenges are growing concerns in the dental profession. And, substance abuse can contribute to and be exacerbated by mental health challenges.



An estimated 10–15% of healthcare professionals, including dentists, will experience a substance use disorder at some point in their careers, according to an article published in *Decisions in Dentistry*.



42% of dentists report symptoms of depression and 44% report anxiety based on a 2025 meta-analysis of 33 studies assessing symptoms via validated self-report tools.



In a survey of over 3,500 dentists, 34% reported physical or emotional exhaustion and 38% reported frequent worry or anxiety.

Dentists face long hours, emotional strain, and the pressure to appear resilient, often while working in isolation. Easy access to controlled substances, stigma around seeking help, and fear of professional repercussions add to the risk of burnout, depression, and substance abuse. A dedicated, confidential recovery program provides a critical lifeline—offering support, structured monitoring, and access to treatment while

preserving careers and, ultimately, protecting public safety through rehabilitation rather than punishment.

## Who Provides the Service?

The California Department of Consumer Affairs Dental Board of California contracts with Premier Health Group (PHG) to provide confidential assessment, referral, and monitoring services for the Recovery Program. PHG is a multidisciplinary behavioral health organization committed to reducing the negative impact of addiction and mental illness on California communities.

## Who Can Refer to the Program?

The Recovery Program accepts voluntary referrals. Any licensed dentist or dental auxiliary experiencing substance abuse may seek assistance by calling the 24-hour toll-free number. Most individuals experiencing these challenges ultimately wish they had sought support sooner—before things escalated personally or professionally.

All voluntary requests for help are strictly confidential, except in cases where a participant is board-referred, in which case updates about progress during enrollment are shared with the licensing board. Individuals are scheduled for a confidential clinical assessment with a licensed professional, during which a monitoring plan is developed. If clinically appropriate, treatment recommendations are also made. Voluntary participants may be assured that their information will be kept confidential and shared only with the Recovery Program team, the relevant licensing board, and the contracted testing vendor unless disclosure is necessary due to a risk of harm to self or others.



# The Recovery Program As An Alternative to Formal Discipline

Dentists and dental auxiliaries are strongly encouraged to self-refer to the Recovery Program. The Dental Board of California may refer eligible licensees when the primary concern involves substance abuse and no other serious violations of the California Dental Practice Act have occurred. The board may also require a licensee to participate in the program as a condition of probation pursuant to disciplinary action taken against the licensee.

## How to Obtain Services

If you are struggling—or if you live or work with a dentist or dental auxiliary who is—call the Recovery Program toll-free at (800) 522-9198, available 24 hours a day.

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## Sources

Al-Rawi, N. H., Uthman, A. T., Saeed, M., Abdulkareem, A. A., Al Bayati, S., & Al Nuaimi, A. (2022). Depression, anxiety and stress among dentists during COVID-19 lockdown. *The Open Dentistry Journal*, 16, e2202242. <https://doi.org/10.2174/18742106-v16-e2202242>

Arias-Vásquez, B., Espinoza-Salcedo, M., et al. (2025). Depression and anxiety among dentists: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Oral & Facial Pain and Headache*. Advance online publication.

Claytor, J. W., Jr. (2021, October 11). Substance use disorders among dentists: An examination of work-life areas that may contribute to substance use disorders in the dental profession – and solutions to mitigate their impact. *Decisions in Dentistry*. <https://decisionsindentistry.com/article/substance-use-disorder-among-dentists/>